

RARE MAMMAL OBSERVATIONS 2003

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Abstract

Reports were received on observations of 1 American marten, 2 observations of wolverine, 5 observations of 2 lynx, 53 observations of 55 cougar, and 9 observations of 12 moose. Reports of 3 moose calves were received, and indicate breeding probably again occurred in Wisconsin. Two radio collared moose were monitored in Wisconsin.

Methods

Observations were collected of rare mammals including timber wolf (*Canis lupus*), American marten (*Martes americana*), Canada lynx (*Lynx canadensis*), cougar (*Puma concolor*), wolverine (*Gulo gulo*), and moose (*Alces alces*). These observations were collected from agency field personnel or members of the general public in 2003. Observations of rare mammals were reported on a "Rare Mammal Observation Card" (Figure 1) and were sent to the DNR office in Park Falls. All observations were classified as "probable", "possible", or "not likely". Only "probable" and "possible" observations are reported here. Moose were usually listed as probable, because they were relatively easy to accurately identify. Animals were classified as adults if they appeared to be ≥ 1 year old, but among carnivores, could include younger animals because adult size was achieved by 6 to 9 months. Animals less than 1 year old were called juveniles, and this included moose calves.

Results & Discussion

Only one marten observation was reported during the period (Table 1). This was an animal killed east of Clam Lake on highway 77 in Ashland County, and the carcass was deposited in the University of Wisconsin, Zoology Museum in Madison. Reports of marten observations in the rare mammal reports are low most years.

Two reports were received of wolverine (Table 2). One observed in Lafayette County may represent an animal escaping from captivity. Observations in northern Wisconsin are less clear, and could be misidentification.

Two reports of lynx were received in Wisconsin (Table 3). Normally a small influx of lynx in Wisconsin occurs every 10 years, and in 1992-1993 several reports of lynx were received and 2 died in Wisconsin in 1992 (Wydeven 1993). In 2002, 7 lynx were reported in Wisconsin, but some may have been misidentified.

Eleven reports of cougar were reported that were classified as probable (Table 4). Reports were received from 5 Wisconsin counties, including 4 reports in Green Lake County in southern Wisconsin, and two reports from Wood County in central Wisconsin. The remaining reports were for northern counties.

Fifty-three observations were made of 55 cougars across Wisconsin that were classified as possible or probable (Table 5). Cougar reports were scattered throughout the state, with most in the north. No reports were received on cougars in southwest Wisconsin. These represent reports of possible cougar observations, but many could be mistaken identifications. Highest observation rates were for Bayfield (6), Oneida (5), Forest (4), and Green Lake (4) counties.

Nine observations of 12 moose were received in 2003 (Table 6). The observations were considerably down from 2001, when fifty-three observations were received of 61 moose, and 2002 when 21 moose observations were reported. Number of counties for moose reports declined from 13 in 2001 to 8 in 2002, and 6 in 2003. Highest report rates were for Vilas county (3) and Iron county (2). The most unusual report was of a cow in cropfields of Calumet County in August. Two calves were reported with a cow in Ashland County and one with a cow in Forest County. Limited breeding apparently is continuing in the state.

Two radio collared moose were monitored in 2003. Adult female 5155 occupied a home range area in northern Forest County since 2001. In fall 2001 and 2002 she returned to Michigan to spend the winter in the Upper Peninsula, but returned to Wisconsin in the spring. In 2003 she remained in Wisconsin in fall and was still in her home range in early winter. Moose 5155 apparently produced a calf in 2002, and possibly produced a calf in 2003.

An adult bull (5131M) entered Iron County in October and remained in Wisconsin from 22 October through 1 December 2003. His locations were mostly in the eastern part of the county.

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Wydeven, A.P. 1993. Rare Mammal Observations. Wisconsin Wildlife Surveys. 2(1):57-62.

Figure 1. Rare mammal observation card.

Rare Mammal Observation Card	
(Use for Timber Wolf, Cougar, Lynx, Moose & Marten)	
Observer:	Description of Animal:
Name _____	Estimated Size _____
Address _____	Tail Length (stub, 1/4 body, 1/2 body, long as body): _____
Phone() _____	Track Size: Length _____ Width _____
Observers Background: _____	Coloration _____
No. & Species _____	Other Descriptions _____
Sex _____ Adult _____ Young _____	Photo Taken _____
Location: GPS _____ / _____	General Comments _____
Sec _____ Twn _____ Range _____	_____
County _____	_____
Road & Nearest Town _____	_____
Habitat _____	Reviewed by _____
Date & Time _____	Agency _____ Phone() _____
	Code: PB PS NL

Table 1. Reported possible and probable observations of American marten in Wisconsin in 2003.

Date	Number seen	Number tracks	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Agency¹
7/8	1	0	5	42N	3W	Ashland	Clam Lake	USFS

¹Agency for whom observer works

Table 2. Reported possible and probable observations of wolverine in Wisconsin in 2003.

Date	Number seen	Number tracks	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Agency¹
6/1	1A	0	35?	41N	10W	Washburn	Stanberry	Private
10/19	1A	0	10	1N	1E	Lafayette	Benton	Private

¹Agency for whom observer works

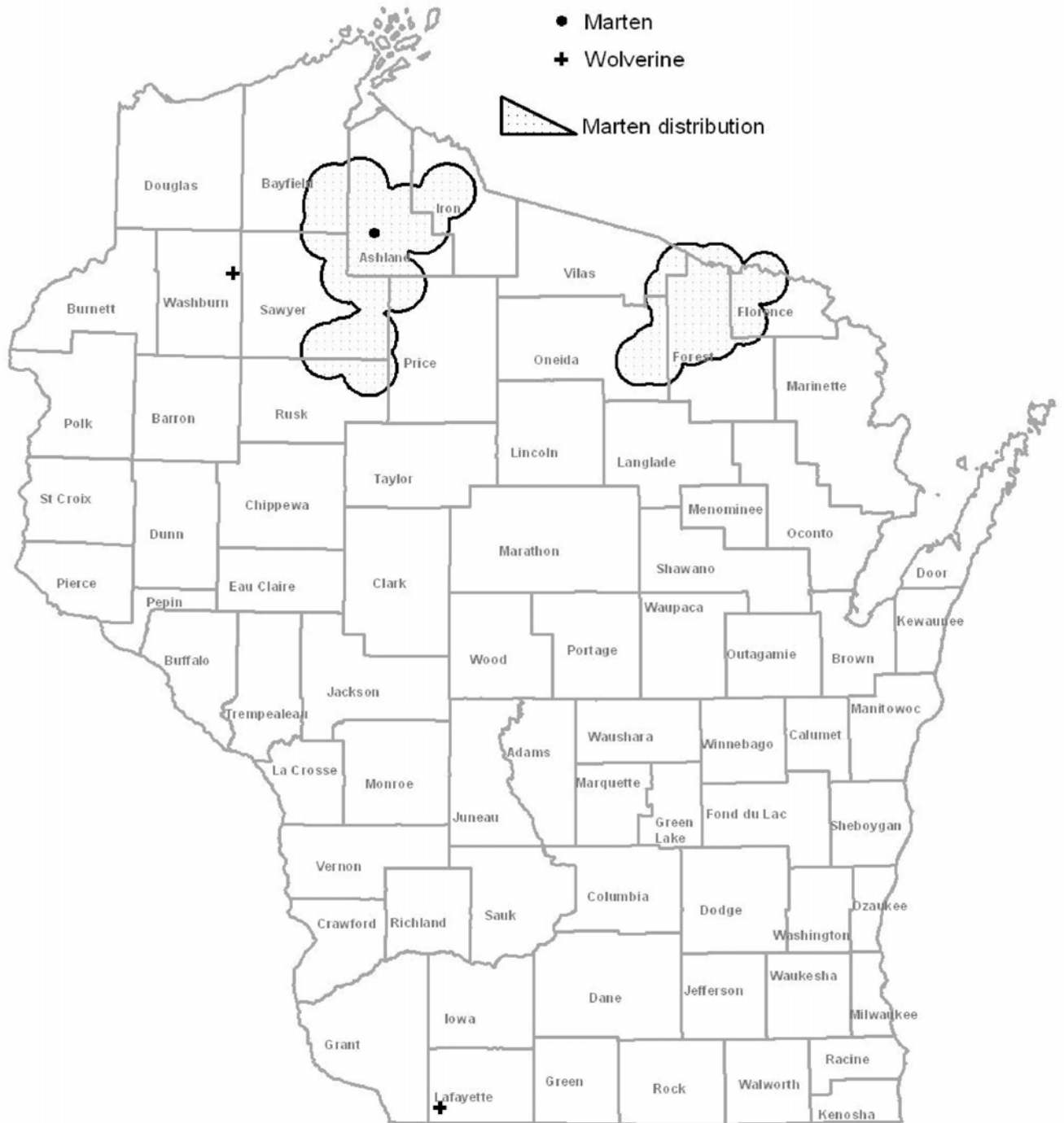


Figure 2. Reported possible and probable marten and wolverine observations in Wisconsin during 2003.

Table 3. Reported possible and probable observations of lynx in Wisconsin in 2003.

Date	Number seen	Number tracks	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Agency¹
1/15	0	1	24	42N	7W	Sawyer	Hayward	Private
9/10	1A	0	1	39N	2E	Price	Fifield	Private

¹Agency for whom observer works

Table 4. Reported probable visual observations of cougars in Wisconsin in 2003.

Date	Number sighted	Sec	Township	Range	County	Nearest Town	Color	Agency¹
01/24	1?	13	34N	10E	Langlade	Elcho	?	Private
09/02	1A	5	37N	9E	Oneida	Rhineland	Tan	Private
09/02	1A	5	37N	8E	Oneida	McNaughton	Tan	Private
09/20	1A	?	37N	9E	Oneida	Rhineland	Tan	?
10/09	1J	7	15N	12E	Green Lake	Princeton	Tan	Private
10/13	1A	22	16N	13E	Green Lake	Green Lake	Tan	Private
10/21	1A	21	16N	13E	Green Lake	Green Lake	Tan	Police
10/22	1?	21	16N	13E	Green Lake	Green Lake	Brown	Private
11/10	1A	4	21N	6E	Wood	Wisconsin Rapids	Tan	Private
11/13	1A	4	21N	6E	Wood	Wisconsin Rapids	Tan	Private
11/17	1?	4	32N	8E	Lincoln	Gleason	Yellow	Private

¹Agency for whom observer works

Table 5. Reported probable and possible observations of cougars in Wisconsin in 2003, by quarter.

County	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Total
Ashland				3	3
Bayfield		2	4 (1 of tracks)		6
Brown	1	1			2
Burnett			1		1
Dane	1				1
Douglas			1		1
Forest	1	1	2		4
Green Lake				4	4
Iron				1	1
Jefferson			1		1
Juneau				1	1
Langlade	1				1
Lincoln		1		1	2
Marinette		1	1		2
Marquette		1			1
Oconto				1 (tracks)	1
Oneida		1	4		5
Ozaukee			1		1
Polk		1 (tracks)	1		2
Price		1	1	1 (report of 2)	3
Rusk			1		1
Shawano			1		1
St. Croix			1		1
Vilas			2	1	3
Waukesha			1 (report of 2)		1
Waupaca			1		1
Wood				2	2
TOTAL	4	10	24 (25 animals)	15 (16 animals)	53 (55 animals)



Figure 3. Reported possible and probable lynx and cougar sightings in Wisconsin during 2003.

Table 6. Reported possible and probable observations of moose in Wisconsin in 2003.

Date	Number sighted	Tracks sighted	Sex	Town ship	Range	Sect.	County	Nearest Town
01/03		1U	U	42N	6E	15	Vilas	Boulder Junction
06/17	1A		F?	37N	11E	5	Oneida	Three Lakes
08/11	1A		F?	19N	18E	13	Calumet	Stockbridge
08/18	1A,2J		1F	48N	3W	22	Ashland	Odanah
10/05		1A	U	43N	6E	12	Vilas	Presque Isle
10/05	1A		M	43N	7E	26	Vilas	Boulder Junction
10/14	1A		M	42N	2E	22	Iron	Springstead
10/15?	1A		M	42N	2E	35	Iron	Springstead
10/15	1A,1J		1F	40N	12E	22?	Forest	Alvin
							6 counties	
								3 Adult M
								4 Adult F
								1 Adult U
								3 Juvenile
								<u>1 Unknown</u>
								12 Total

¹A=Adult; J=Juvenile; U=Unknown

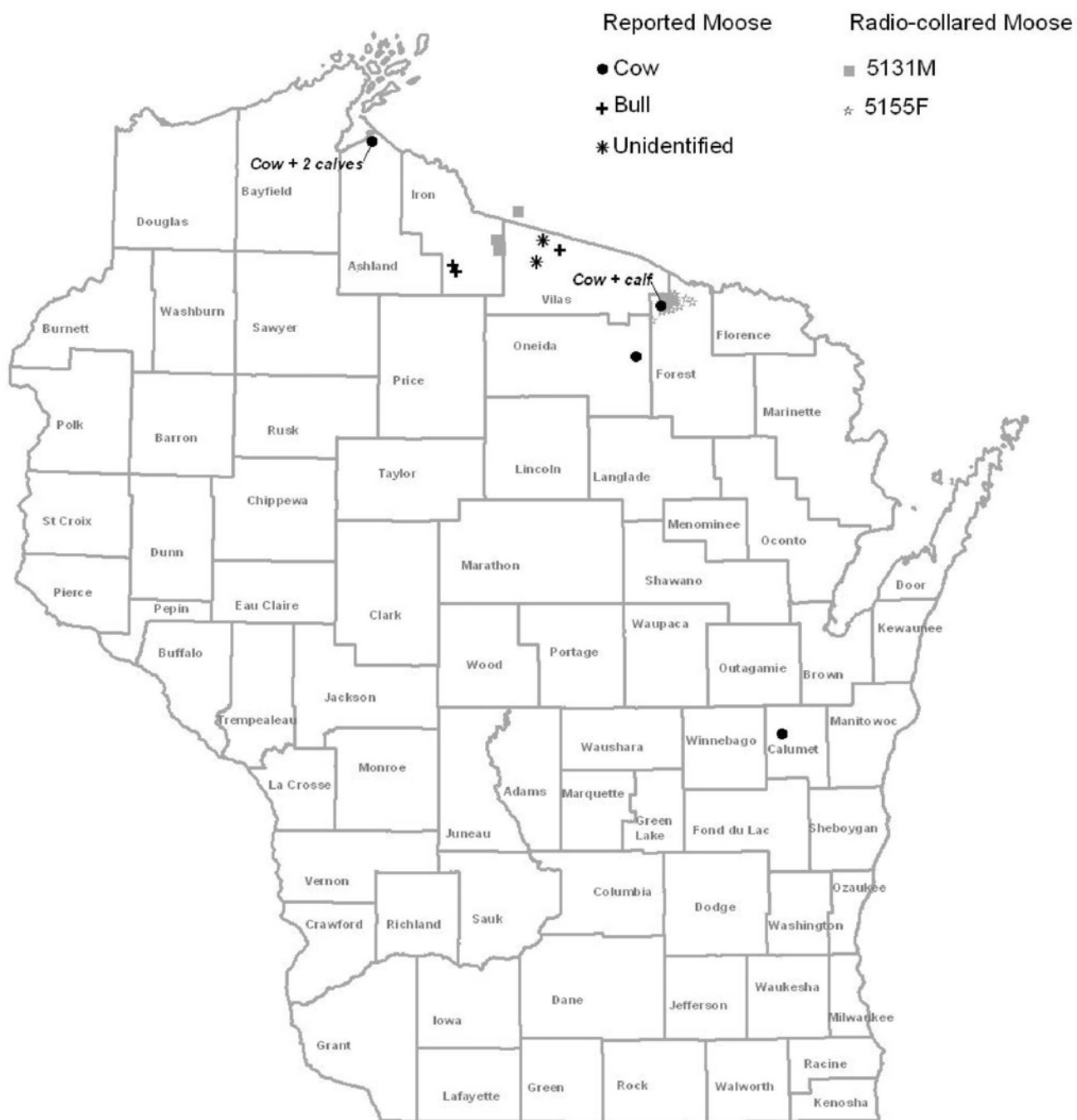


Figure 4. Reported possible and probable moose observations and moose radiolocations in Wisconsin during 2003.